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BLUE PRIZE RUNS DOWN FARRELL IN GRADE II, \$200,000 FLEUR DE LIS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 16, 2018) – Merriebelle Stable LLC's 5-year-old Argentina-bred mare **Blue Prize (ARG)** rallied down the stretch to run down pacesetter **Farrell** and win Saturday night's 43rd running of the \$200,000 Fleur de Lis Handicap Presented by Budweiser (Grade II) at Churchill Downs by 1 ½ lengths.

Ridden by New York-based **Jose Ortiz** for trainer **Ignacio "Nacho" Correas IV** ran 1 1/8 miles on a fast track in 1:50.02 to bank the \$119,040 first prize and secure a berth in the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Distaff (GI) at Churchill Downs on Nov. 3 because the race for fillies and mares is a **Breeders' Cup Challenge Series "Win and You're In"** stakes event. Currently, Blue Prize (ARG) is not Breeders' Cup nominated.

Runner-up **Farrell** attempted to wire the field of nine as she dictated terms through quarter-mile splits of :23.97, :48.57 and 1:12.45. Blue Prize (ARG) chased the pace early and fanned five wide on the far turn to drive past Farrell in deep stretch for the win.

Blue Prize (ARG), the 2-1 favorite at 118 pounds, returned \$6.60, \$4.40 and \$3. Farrell, with **Jose Ortiz** up as the 119-pound starting high weight, paid \$7.60 and \$5.80. **Mopotism**, ridden by **Mario Gutierrez** under 118 pounds, was another three lengths back in third and returned \$4.20. **Awestruck**, **Song of Spring**, **Valadorna**, **Fuhriously Kissed**, **Streamline** and **Apologynotaccepted** completed the order of finish.

Blue Prize (ARG) improved her record to five wins, seven seconds and one third in 14 starts with earnings of \$605,233.

Blue Prize (ARG) is a daughter of Pure Prize out of the Not For Sale (ARG) mare Blues for Sale (ARG) and was bred by **Bioart S.A.**

The Fleur de Lis, which means "Flower of the Lily," honors the French symbol that is incorporated into the city of Louisville's flag.

FLEUR DE LIS HANDICAP QUOTES

JOSE ORTIZ, jockey of BLUE PRIZE (ARG) (winner): "This horse is very tactical. I let her save ground and when we started asking her to go she just took off. I'm very happy with her effort tonight and I know she'll do well in the future."

IGNACIO CORREAS IV, trainer of BLUE PRIZE (ARG) (winner): "This filly absolutely loves it here at Churchill Downs, as do I. It was a great race from her and it sets her up for a good year with the Breeders' Cup back here in November. She's improved since we got her from Argentina and I think she's just getting better."

CHANNING HILL, jockey on FARRELL (runner-up): "This is probably the best race she's run. I give a lot of credit to the winner. She came and chased me down. I couldn't believe she got outrun. This filly kicked on and she did everything I asked today – I mean everything. Today was the first day that she put her head down and really tried hard all the way to the wire. I've got to give her a lot of credit to the winner. I couldn't believe she run by me that easy."

WAYNE CATALANO, trainer of FARRELL (runner-up): "She ran a very good race and we're proud of her. Obviously we all like to win, but she ran good. She went out there and did what she was supposed to do, but just wasn't quite good enough."

Q: This was her first really terrific race a mile and an eighth ... "I don't think the distance is that much of a problem. She can get it. She might like a mile and a sixteenth a little better, but they write the race like that write the race."

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